

Parking

Summary and Benefits:

Parking policies impact the design, location, and financial viability of new developments. The costs of providing parking can affect whether a project is viable and the level of affordability that can be achieved, as providing a single parking space ranges from \$5,000 per surface parking spot to as much as \$60,000 per each underground parking space.

Also, even though such spaces come at great cost, they may not be fully utilized—particularly in affordable housing developments. Parking requirements have a disproportionate impact on housing for low income households because low income households consistently own fewer vehicles than their higher income counterparts and are more burdened by the extra expenses. In a study of affordable housing and parking needs, the City of San Diego found that residents of affordable housing owned cars at half the rate of residents of market rate rental housing. In addition to reducing housing costs, modifications to parking policies can encourage residents to own fewer cars, drive less, and increase use of transit, walking and biking which contributes to better health.

In the Bay Area, Priority Development Areas (PDAs) are an excellent location for affordable housing development. The proximity to quality transit warrants lower parking levels for new housing, which lowers per-unit developmental costs and allows for more housing for a given budget, while providing other less expensive modes of access for residents.

Potential Policies:

1. *Reduce or eliminate unnecessary parking requirements:* Eliminate requirements for additional parking for new development in downtowns and town centers, allowing customized approaches.
 - a. *Unbundle parking (residential and commercial):* Require the cost to own or lease a parking space to be unbundled from the price to rent or own a commercial or residential space. This increases housing affordability for households that do not use parking.
 - b. *Share parking:* Adopt policies to encourage or require shared parking between uses rather than reserved parking for specific users and tenants.
 - c. *Allow tandem parking* (when two spaces are located end to end) to count toward satisfying parking requirements.
 - d. *Consider parking maximums* for very transit-rich, walkable and congested areas to reduce local congestion and enhance the environment for walking and use of alternative modes.
2. *Promote alternative modes (with transit passes, car sharing, bike lanes, pedestrian amenities, etc.):* Incorporate requirements for free or discounted transit passes, carshare incentives, bicycle parking and pedestrian amenities in lieu of some parking.
3. *Coordinate prices for on-street and off-street parking:* Pricing parking reduces parking demand, ensures that end-users carry more of the cost, and promotes turnover. Coordination of pricing between on-street and off-street is essential to achieve parking management goals. Adopt a parking availability target: Set a goal that parking availability be maintained at around 15 percent through the use of pricing, time limits and adjustable rates/regulations, and allow parking staff to adjust prices to achieve this goal.
4. *Manage parking:* engage in active parking management to better utilize existing parking and use of revenues.
 - a. *Track parking utilization in buildings and the neighborhood:* This allows residents of buildings with less parking to park elsewhere in the neighborhood and enables buildings

- to be built with fewer parking spots than would normally be required.
- b. *Establish parking benefit districts*: Net revenue collected from parking pricing and permit revenues could be dedicated to funding community priorities within designated Parking Benefit Districts.
 - c. *Establish Transferable Parking Entitlements*: Jurisdictions could designate the number of parking spaces made available for a development as an “entitlement” that could be bought or sold if they are unused.
5. *Establish and publicize policies to require or encourage employers to offer alternative access for employees*. Transportation Demand Management refers to a range of policies and programs to reduce vehicle miles travelled (VMT) which, in turn, decrease the need for parking. Possible policies include carpool parking, parking pricing, flexible work schedules, and ridesharing. The Air District and MTC are developing a Bay Area Commuter Benefits Program to promote the use of alternative commute modes such as transit, ridesharing, biking and walking. The program would require employers with 50 or more full-time employees in the Bay Area to offer one of the benefits, see http://www.mtc.ca.gov/news/current_topics/10-13/cbp.htm

Model Ordinances/Useful Sources:

- MTC’s Parking Policies for Smart Growth:
http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/parking/
- Parking Code Guidance: Case Studies and Model Provisions:
http://www.mtc.ca.gov/planning/smart_growth/parking/6-12/Parking_Code_Guidance_June_2012.pdf
- Redwood City Article 30 Parking and Loading:
<http://library.municode.com/HTML/16091/level1/ART30OREPALO.html#ART3>
- The city of Berkeley recently partnered with AC Transit and several regional agencies to provide free transit passes and expand access to car sharing in their downtown through their GoBerkeley program: <http://online.wsj.com/article/PR-CO-20130627-910529.html>
- San Francisco’s award winning SF Park program uses demand pricing and innovative payment schemes to encourage parking in underutilized areas: <http://sfpark.org/>
- For a study considering lower rates of auto ownership and affordable housing please see San Diego’s Affordable Housing and Parking study:
<http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/transportation/mobility/pdf/111231sdaafhfinal.pdf>